

**Legislative Testimony**  
**Public Health Committee**  
**HB 5447 AAC The Certificate Of Need Process**  
**Friday, March 12, 2010**  
**John Hillgen, D.M.D.**

Senator Harris, Representative Ritter, and the members of the Public Health Committee, my name is John Hillgen. I am a practicing Oral & Maxillofacial Surgeon in Waterbury. I am also on the Board of Governors for the Connecticut State Dental Association and Chairman of the Cone Beam Task Force. Please accept this as my testimony urging your support of HB 5447 AAC The Certificate Of Need Process, Section 5b-17.

The dental cone beam scanner is a radiographic system that provides three-dimensional imaging of the oral and maxillofacial area. It allows dentists to have real time access to extremely accurate images of vital structures like nerves and blood vessels. This is particularly important in implant dentistry, oral and maxillofacial pathology, temporomandibular joint disorders, craniofacial or orthognathic surgery, and removing deeply impacted teeth.

Similar to dental panoramic x-ray machines, dental cone beam scanners use much lower-energy anode tubes. As a result, the patient is exposed to a much lower dosage of radiation as compared to conventional medical CT scanners. Like a full mouth series of x-rays received in the dental office, cone beam technology uses an equivalent exposure of radiation, or less than 10% of the radiation of a conventional CT scanner. One of the reasons for the decreased dosage delivered to the patient is that dental cone beam scanners only rotate around the patient once. Furthermore, the field of a cone beam is much more limited, sometimes involving just a few teeth.

This technology is a significant improvement over panoramic x-rays, which will undoubtedly result in better patient care. Additionally, the use of dental cone beam scanners will substantially improve patient access and convenience because scans can be taken while the patient is in the office. Moreover, the availability of this less expensive dental cone beam technology will lower the patient's cost thereby providing increased access to a larger dental population. No longer will a patient be required to make a potentially less accessible trip to obtain a more costly medical CT scan at another facility.

Dental cone beam technology falls under the broad definition of CT scanners, on the basis of obtaining these three dimensional images. In Connecticut, a Certificate of Need ("CON") authorization is required for anyone acquiring, purchasing, or accepting donation of a dental cone beam scanner. Connecticut is one of only two states that require a CON for dental cone beam equipment. In Connecticut, however, the process is comparably more difficult than it is in Michigan, the other state requiring a CON.

The purpose of submitting these comments is not for us to determine the validity of CON laws. When the Connecticut General Assembly debated this issue and deemed these laws

necessary, dental practices were not part of that debate. Moreover, the study data showing that Connecticut has better utilization of imaging services without compromising quality do not include dentistry. Therefore, with regard to dentistry, the existing statutes and regulations of the Office of Health Care Access ("OHCA") policies concerning CT technology have not been properly debated.

Last year, the CSDA Task Force on CT Scanners was convened to review and evaluate questions submitted by OHCA. The task force concluded that dental cone beam technology falls under the broad definition of CT scanners, but are a distinct subset of CT scanners. In the dental health care system, dental cone beam scanners provide essential diagnostic information that is not provided by currently used panoramic radiographs. Dental cone beam scanners do not compete with medical CT scanners, have no affect on the medical health care system and should therefore be exempt from the CON process. There use should be permitted in dental offices as requested.

In closing, I would like to thank the Committee for allowing me to testify. I am also happy to make myself available, now or at any other time, should you have questions.

Respectfully Submitted,

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